

# B RAP news

## Business RECYCLING Assistance Program

Waste Management Information for South Carolina Businesses

April 15, 2004

## Successful recycling event brings e-waste issue to forefront

**COLUMBIA, SC** – On April 3, the S.C. Department of Commerce and the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) along with several Midlands community partners interested in recycling unwanted electronics turned the Colonial Center parking lot into a massive mountain of worn out televisions, cell phones, stereos and computers too slow to cope with the latest high-speed chase. Thanks to a \$10,000 grant from Dell, Inc. and the many volunteers, more than 100 tons of unwanted household electronics were packed into five tractor trailers that were shipped to Anderson County for processing by Earth Protection Services, Inc. The products, ranging from 8-track tape players and turntables to laptops and DVD players, will be recycled.

This one-day collection of electronic waste, also known as e-waste, was not just a chance for Midlands residents to clean out their attics and make room for the latest flat screen or laptop model they've been eyeing. More than 1,000 people showed up loads of scrap electronics, confirming the growing



concern among consumers that throwing these products into the conventional garbage goes against everything our children are taught — don't waste valuable resources and don't pollute the environment.

The good news is that much of the electronic scrap collected will be recycled for the metals, plastic, and glass components and limited re-use opportunities exist for newer computer products. There are a growing number

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*The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reports that the e-waste stream is growing at three times the rate of municipal solid waste and many components contain contaminants such as lead, mercury and other potentially toxic materials that can pose threats to human health and the environment. The sheer volume of this waste stream is staggering when you consider that South Carolinians will generate more than 1.5 million unwanted devices this year alone.*



South Carolina  
Department of Commerce

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of companies popping up around the state that are responsibly recycling these materials and, as more e-waste is recovered by communities, the potential for more jobs increases as well.

And while there is a growing awareness about proper disposal of e-waste, many small businesses and large corporations must accept the responsibility that they bear for making sure their used electronics are managed appropriately. In South Carolina, recycling of used electronics is the preferred management practice, according to DHEC. Managed under the Universal Waste Rule, used electronics as well as mercury containing lamps (i.e. fluorescent bulbs) can be recycled to reduce these common wastes from entering the municipal solid waste stream. It also provides companies with a less expensive alternative to managing these materials compared to treating them as a hazardous waste and being subject to more stringent regulations.

Through the Business Recycling Assistance Program, companies and organizations of all sizes can receive information about businesses that offer electronics recycling, refurbishment and reuse services.

Dell's financial support for this event was part of its "No Computer Should Go To Waste" campaign. Dell and other companies

are working with state and local government officials to forge a comprehensive product stewardship agreement that successfully reduces environmental hazards and promotes responsible resource management.

Community partners for the Midlands Electronics Recycling event included the S.C. Department of Commerce's Recycling Market Development Advisory Council, DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling, Keep the Midlands Beautiful, University of South Carolina, Sonoco-Paper Stock Dealers, Carolina Recycling Association, PalmettoPride and the City of Columbia.



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